

Professional Talent Development and Career Development of Vocational Education in Xi'an China

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the alignment between vocational education and societal needs by exploring the relationships among competency, task performance, and professional identity of vocational educators in Xi'an, China. For the quantitative component, 390 teachers and administrators from higher vocational colleges were surveyed to assess how competency influences task performance and professional identity. Structural equation modeling (SEM) confirmed significant positive relationships, with task performance partially mediating the effect of competency on professional identity. Results highlighted demographic differences in competency development, emphasizing the need for targeted professional training. Recommendations include implementing competency-based training, fostering lifelong learning, and enhancing institutional support systems through recognition, feedback, and tailored interventions.

Keywords: Competency, Task Performance, Professional Identity, Vocational Education, Professional Talent Development

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Introduction

The cultivation of professional competencies among teachers and administrative personnel in higher vocational colleges is a crucial area of educational research, particularly in addressing the alignment between institutional goals and societal demands. Situated in central China, Xi'an has emerged as a leading hub for education, technology, and industrial innovation, making it a representative context for examining how vocational institutions respond to shifting workforce requirements. As the educational landscape evolves, driven by technological advancements and changing labor market expectations, the role of teachers and administrators extends beyond traditional responsibilities, requiring enhanced competencies to meet complex institutional challenges and foster sustainable career development (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

This is particularly pertinent in Xi'an, where vocational colleges must equip students for high-demand sectors such as manufacturing, IT, and cultural tourism, yet face significant challenges in aligning educational practices with industry standards.

Despite government-led efforts such as the "Xi'an Talent Development Plan," which aims to enhance workforce readiness for emerging industries, a persistent mismatch exists between educators' current competencies and the dynamic demands of the labor market. Many vocational teachers and administrative staff lack up-to-date industry knowledge, interdisciplinary collaboration skills, or pedagogical innovation capacity, resulting in inadequate student preparation for employment. These competency gaps have led to tangible consequences, such as low graduate employment rates, weak employer satisfaction, and diminished institutional reputation. In addition, outdated curricula, limited industry-academic collaboration, and insufficient professional development mechanisms exacerbate these problems, revealing deep structural shortcomings in teacher and administrator training systems.

Competency, defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective professional performance, has been widely acknowledged as a key determinant of task performance, which refers to the efficiency and quality of task execution (McLagan, 1997). For educators and administrative staff, high competency levels enable them to address complex challenges, contribute effectively to institutional development, and achieve meaningful task outcomes. Moreover, task performance serves as a significant predictor of professional identity, reflecting the extent to which individuals internalize their roles and align them with their self-concept (Zhang et al., 2016). As such, competency is hypothesized to influence professional identity both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of task performance.

Existing research has predominantly examined the direct effects of competency on task performance or professional identity in general organizational contexts (Li et al., 2024). However, studies specifically exploring the mediating role of task performance in vocational educational settings remain limited, especially in regions like Xi'an where vocational colleges face acute pressures to meet economic development goals. Many current professional development programs prioritize technical skill upgrades or pedagogical improvement, yet lack a comprehensive model that integrates task performance as a critical link between competency and professional identity. Additionally, there is insufficient empirical research on competency-based training frameworks designed specifically for both teaching and administrative roles in vocational institutions.

This study addresses these gaps by empirically investigating how competency affects professional identity among teachers and administrative personnel in Xi'an's higher vocational colleges, with task performance examined as a mediating variable. The research provides an integrated framework to understand the pathways through which enhanced competencies translate into stronger professional identity, thereby offering theoretical and practical insights. The findings aim to inform policymakers and institutional leaders in designing targeted, competency-based training strategies that meet local industrial demands, improve institutional

effectiveness, and support the long-term professional growth of vocational educators and administrators.

Research Objective

1. To analyze the differences in competency, task performance, and professional identity based on demographic variables (gender, age, degree, and birthplace).
2. To examine the relationships between competency, task performance, and professional identity.

Research Methodology

1. Population and Sample

This study selects Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, as the sample region based on the following three considerations: First, Xi'an is the capital city of Shaanxi Province and a new first-tier city in China. The region has a strong economic foundation, a high density of vocational colleges, and a significant number of quality institutions. As of 2023, Xi'an has 64 higher education institutions, including 21 vocational colleges, ranking among the top nationwide in terms of quantity. Second, vocational colleges in Xi'an have a long history of development, with generally high standards of vocational education. As of now, Xi'an has six nationally recognized exemplary vocational colleges and nine provincially recognized exemplary vocational colleges. This study selects vocational colleges at or above the provincial exemplary level as the survey sample and collects data by distributing questionnaires through teacher groups on platforms such as WeChat and QQ. A total of 390 valid questionnaires were obtained (Table 1).

Table 1 Research Samples

Variables		Main Study	
		n	prop. (%)
Gender	Male	206	52.82
	Female	184	47.18
Age	≤ 30	143	36.67
	> 30	247	63.33
Degree	Undergraduate	171	43.85
	Master	157	40.26
	Ph.D.	62	15.90
Birthplace	Eastern	90	23.08
	Central	102	26.15
	Western	198	50.77

The demographic distribution of the research samples provides a comprehensive overview of the participants' characteristics (Table 2). Out of the 390 individuals surveyed, the gender representation is relatively balanced, with 206 males (52.82%) and 184 females (47.18%),

ensuring a fair representation of both genders in the study. In terms of age, a majority of the participants, 247 individuals (63.33%), are above the age of 30, while 143 individuals (36.67%) are aged 30 or below, indicating a larger proportion of mature and potentially more experienced individuals in the sample. Regarding educational qualifications, the participants are divided into three categories: 171 individuals (43.85%) hold undergraduate degrees, forming the largest group, followed by 157 individuals (40.26%) with master's degrees, and 62 individuals (15.90%) holding Ph.D. degrees. This distribution reflects a significant representation of individuals with advanced education, which may influence their competency and professional identity. From a regional perspective, the majority of participants, 198 individuals (50.77%), are from the Western region, followed by 102 individuals (26.15%) from the Central region and 90 individuals (23.08%) from the Eastern region. This regional disparity highlights potential geographical differences that may affect vocational education and professional identity. Overall, the sample is diverse across multiple demographic variables, although the overrepresentation of participants over 30 years old and from the Western region may introduce slight biases, which should be considered when interpreting the study results.

2. Research Instrument

The competency scale used in this study is adapted from the scale developed by Lin et al. (2012) and adjusted to reflect real-world workplace contexts. The scale includes two core dimensions: professional skills and professional attitudes, comprising a total of 28 items. It is designed to comprehensively measure participants' performance and professional qualities in practical applications. The professional skills dimension consists of 13 items that primarily assess teachers' performance in knowledge delivery, management, problem-solving, and communication skills. The professional attitudes dimension includes 15 items, focusing on evaluating teachers' sense of responsibility, proactiveness, and care for students. The scale adopts a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating a higher evaluation of teachers' competencies by students. Reliability analysis showed that the scale has a Cronbach's α of 0.813.

For the task performance dimension, this study employs the Task Performance Questionnaire developed by Janssen et al. (2004), which contains a total of 5 items. The questionnaire focuses primarily on teachers' performance in completing tasks. It also uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating a higher evaluation of teachers' task performance. Reliability analysis demonstrated that the scale has a Cronbach's α of 0.704.

The professional identity scale used in this study is based on the Professional Identity Assessment Scale developed by Zhu and Cao (2024). It comprises 30 items divided into five dimensions: professional cognition and evaluation, professional social support, professional social skills, coping with professional setbacks, and professional self-reflection. The scale adopts a 5-point scoring system ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with higher scores

indicating higher levels of professional identity. Reliability analysis revealed that the scale has a Cronbach's α of 0.775.

3. Statistical Methods

This study employs a questionnaire survey method and conducts multi-level statistical analyses using SPSS based on the research model. First, a reliability analysis is performed on the variables involved in the questionnaire (e.g., teacher competency, professional skills, professional attitudes, teacher task performance, and student satisfaction). Cronbach's α coefficient is used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire to ensure its reliability. Second, t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are utilized to examine the differences in research variables across different demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, education, and birthplace). Third, correlation analysis is conducted to investigate the relationships among the variables, further clarifying the connections between competency, task performance, and career development. Additionally, multiple regression analysis is applied to explore the impact of teacher competency (including professional skills and professional attitudes) on teacher task performance and to test the mediating role of task performance in the relationship between competency and professional identity.

Conceptual Framework

Literature Review:

The relationship between competency and professional identity has garnered significant attention in the field of education and has become an important topic in educational research. Studies have shown that the competency level of teachers directly influences their sense of professional identity (Li et al., 2024). Competency is often defined as the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by teachers in educational practice, directly impacting their teaching effectiveness and professional development (McLagan, 1997). Professional identity, on the other hand, pertains to teachers' understanding and acceptance of their professional roles, which influences their job satisfaction and career commitment (Beijaard et al., 2004). Specifically, teachers with high competency are more likely to achieve success in teaching practices, thereby enhancing their professional identity and satisfaction (Kim & Kang, 2020).

Chen (2017) conducted a study on novice kindergarten teachers in Province V and found a positive correlation between teachers' professional competency and their sense of professional identity. Furthermore, teaching practice, as a critical stage in teachers' career development, has a dual effect on professional identity. Ren et al. (2023) noted that teaching practice can enhance pre-service teachers' sense of professional benefits, thereby strengthening their professional identity, but it can also increase role pressure, potentially weakening professional identity. Additionally, a survey conducted by Yang et al. (2015) on 524 primary and secondary school teachers found a significant positive predictive relationship between teachers' competency and professional identity, with professional identity partially mediating the relationship between competency and professional development. This finding indicates that improving teachers'

competency can enhance their professional identity, thereby promoting professional development. Zhang (2006) also pointed out that teachers' professional identity is the psychological foundation for professional development, emphasizing the importance of self-reflection in forming professional identity. Therefore, enhancing teachers' competency, such as fostering professional knowledge, teaching skills, and emotional regulation abilities, is crucial for strengthening their professional identity. This not only supports teachers' personal career development but also contributes positively to the improvement of educational quality.

Task performance refers to the efficiency and effectiveness individuals demonstrate in executing tasks directly related to their roles (Motowidlo et al., 2014). Research indicates a significant positive correlation between teachers' competency levels and their task performance. For example, Xu et al., (2023), based on the Selection-Optimization-Compensation Theory, explored the relationship between employee age and task performance. They found that information processing speed and proactive behavior serve as mediating mechanisms, with job characteristics moderating these pathways. Similarly, Chen and Li (2023), using the Self-Concept Theory, examined the impact of visionary leadership on employees' proactive behaviors and discovered dual mediation effects of clarity and detail in future work self-concept, moderated by leadership consistency. These studies underscore the critical influence of competency on task performance, suggesting that educational institutions should focus on enhancing teachers' competency to improve task performance.

The relationship between task performance and professional identity has been a focal point in organizational behavior research. Research has shown that professional identity significantly predicts task performance. For instance, a study by Li et al., (2020) on 760 grassroots civil servants revealed that professional identity positively predicts job performance, with higher levels of professional identity associated with better job performance. Similarly, Zhou (2023) found a significant correlation between professional identity and job performance among 295 kindergarten teachers, with professional identity positively predicting job performance. These findings highlight the importance of enhancing employees' professional identity to improve task performance.

Conversely, task performance has also been shown to significantly enhance professional identity. This relationship has received widespread attention in organizational behavior and psychology. High task performance can strengthen employees' positive evaluations of their professional roles, thereby enhancing their sense of professional identity (Rich et al., 2010). According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), high task performance boosts employees' sense of achievement and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), making them more likely to associate personal accomplishments with their professional roles, thereby reinforcing professional belongingness. Empirical studies further support this perspective. For example, Wang and Li (2021) found a significant positive correlation between employees' task performance levels and professional identity, particularly in high-responsibility positions. Similarly, Zhao (2020) showed that task performance indirectly enhances professional identity by boosting employees' sense of

achievement and self-efficacy. Additionally, positive feedback mechanisms and rewards play a critical role in linking task performance and professional identity, as successful task performance enhances employees' recognition of professional value through organizational acknowledgment and incentives (Imran et al., 2025). These findings suggest that improving task performance not only helps employees achieve higher work efficiency but also enhances their professional identity.

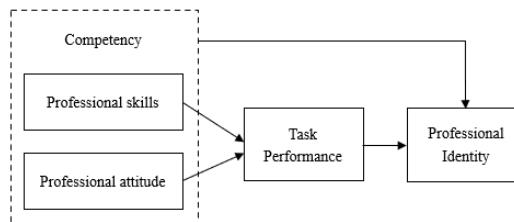


Figure 1 Research Framework

Results

This study conducted descriptive statistical analysis on the three variables of competency, task performance, and professional identity among university teachers. The analysis results (Table 2) show that the overall mean score of the competency scale is 3.15, indicating that teachers' competency performance in their work is moderate and aligns with practical expectations. In terms of individual dimensions, the overall mean score for professional skills is 3.33, while the overall mean score for professional attitudes is 3.35, suggesting that teachers' levels of professional skills and attitudes are similar and generally average. These scores reflect participants' acknowledgment of teachers' abilities but also highlight significant room for improvement. The task performance score is relatively higher, with a mean of 3.17, indicating that teachers' work has achieved participants' satisfaction. Regarding professional identity, the overall mean score is 3.10, which is above the midpoint, reflecting a generally positive level of professional identity among the sample.

Table 2 Results of Description Analysis

	Mean	Std Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Professional Skill	3.33	0.849	1.38	4.92
Professional Attitude	3.35	0.807	1.60	4.93
Task Performance	3.17	1.033	1.00	5.00
Professional Identity	3.10	0.945	1.33	4.93

This research presented the difference analysis result, the result (Table 3) of the difference analysis indicates significant differences in competency, task performance, and professional identity across gender, age, education level, and regional background. For task performance, the mean score for females was 4.04 ± 0.35 , significantly higher than that for males (3.83 ± 0.43 , $t=3.874$, $p<0.01$). Similarly, the mean score for professional identity among females was 4.03 ± 0.55 , higher than that of males (3.87 ± 0.64 , $t=1.945$, approaching significance). In terms

of age differences, the task performance score for the ≤ 30 age group was 4.09 ± 0.37 , significantly higher than the > 30 age group's score of 3.91 ± 0.39 ($t=3.344$, $p<0.01$). However, no significant differences were found across education levels in competency, task performance, or professional identity ($p>0.05$). Regarding regional background, the scores were highest in the central region, with a competency score of 4.10 ± 0.49 , followed by the eastern region (3.99 ± 0.49), and lowest in the western region (3.89 ± 0.48 , $F=4.436$, $p<0.05$). For professional identity, the central region scored 4.17 ± 0.68 , the eastern region scored 4.13 ± 0.56 , and the western region scored the lowest at 3.93 ± 0.58 ($F=4.725$, $p<0.01$). These findings indicate that gender, age, and regional background significantly influence certain aspects of teachers' competency, task performance, and professional identity, with differences in task performance and professional identity being particularly notable.

Table 3 Difference Analysis Results

Variables	Competency		Task Performance		Professional Identity	
	M \pm SD	t/F	M \pm SD	t/F	M \pm SD	t/F
Gender						
Male	3.95 \pm 0.45	3.995	3.83 \pm 0.43	3.874	3.87 \pm 0.64	1.945
Female	4.21 \pm 0.47		4.04 \pm 0.35		4.03 \pm 0.55	
Age						
≤ 30	4.11 \pm 0.53	1.593	4.09 \pm 0.37	3.344	4.30 \pm 0.57	4.929
> 30	4.00 \pm 0.48		3.91 \pm 0.39		3.86 \pm 0.66	
Degree						
Undergraduate	3.82 \pm 0.50	27.518	3.66 \pm 0.41	54.984	3.87 \pm 0.55	10.476
Master	3.98 \pm 0.48		4.07 \pm 0.38		4.15 \pm 0.63	
Ph.D.	4.33 \pm 0.50		4.23 \pm 0.38		2.12 \pm 0.58	
Birthplace						
Eastern	3.99 \pm 0.49	4.436	4.04 \pm 0.36	16.845	4.13 \pm 0.56	4.725
Central	4.10 \pm 0.49		4.12 \pm 0.43		4.17 \pm 0.68	
Western	3.89 \pm 0.48		3.81 \pm 0.36		3.93 \pm 0.58	

Note: * <0.10 , ** <0.01

According to the results of the correlation analysis (Table 4), there are significant positive correlations between professional skills, professional attitudes, competency, task performance, and professional identity ($p<0.01$). Specifically, the correlation between professional skills and professional identity is the highest ($r=0.531$, $p<0.01$), indicating that stronger professional skills are associated with a higher sense of professional identity among teachers. Additionally, professional skills are significantly positively correlated with task performance ($r=0.499$, $p<0.01$), competency ($r=0.446$, $p<0.01$), and professional attitudes ($r=0.453$, $p<0.01$), demonstrating the positive effects of professional skills across multiple dimensions. Similarly, the correlation between professional attitudes and professional identity is also high ($r=0.529$, $p<0.01$),

highlighting the critical role of teachers' positive attitudes in enhancing their professional identity. Moreover, professional attitudes are significantly positively correlated with task performance ($r=0.495$, $p<0.01$) and competency ($r=0.468$, $p<0.01$), further emphasizing the importance of professional attitudes. Competency is strongly correlated with task performance ($r=0.541$, $p<0.01$) and professional identity ($r=0.511$, $p<0.01$), suggesting that higher competency levels are associated with better work performance and a stronger sense of professional identity among teachers. Notably, the correlation between task performance and professional identity is the highest among all variables ($r=0.570$, $p<0.01$), indicating that improvements in task performance play a crucial role in enhancing professional identity.

Table 4 Correlation Analysis Results

	1	2	3	4	5
1	1				
2	0.453**	1			
3	0.446**	0.468**	1		
4	0.499**	0.495**	0.541**	1	
5	0.531**	0.529**	0.511**	0.570**	1

Note: * <0.10 , ** <0.01 ; 1=Professional Skill, 2=Professional Attitude, 3= Competency, 4=Task Performance, 5=Professional Identity.

Using task performance as a mediating variable, professional skills and professional attitudes were respectively set as the main explanatory variables to construct equations and verify the relationships among the variables. The specific results are shown in Tables 5 and Table 6.

As shown in Table 8, the direct effect test indicates that the 95% confidence interval is [0.023, 0.27], and the test results do not include 0. The p-values are all less than 0.05, indicating that the direct effect is significant. For the indirect effect test, the 95% confidence interval is [0.015, 0.106], and the test results also do not include 0. The p-values are less than 0.05, indicating that the indirect effect is significant. In summary, task performance plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between professional skills and professional identity, accounting for 27.8% of the total effect.

Table 5 Verification of the Mediating Effect of Task Performance on the Relationship Between Professional Skills and Professional Identity

	B	Bootstrap 95%CI		
		Lower	Upper	p
Direct effect	0.148	0.023	0.270	0.023
Indirect effect	0.057	0.015	0.106	0.007
Total effect	0.205	0.089	0.322	0.003

The mediating effect of task performance on the relationship between professional attitudes and professional identity is verified in Table 5. The direct effect test shows that the 95% confidence interval is [0.054, 0.298], and the test results do not include 0. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the direct effect is significant. The indirect effect test shows that the 95% confidence interval is [0.016, 0.107], and the test results also do not include 0. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the indirect effect is significant. In summary, task performance plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between professional attitudes and professional identity, accounting for 24.45% of the total effect.

Table 6 Verification of the Mediating Effect of Task Performance on the Relationship Between Professional Attitudes and Professional Identity

	B	Bootstrap 95%CI		
		Lower	Upper	p
Direct effect	0.173	0.054	0.298	0.007
Indirect effect	0.056	0.016	0.107	0.006
Total effect	0.0229	0.119	0.347	0.001

Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the intricate relationships among competency, task performance, and professional identity in vocational education settings, providing both theoretical and practical implications. The positive relationship between competency and task performance observed in this study aligns with prior research that underscores the critical role of professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes in enhancing educators' effectiveness (Xu et al., 2024). Specifically, the significant correlations between professional skills and task performance and between professional attitudes and task performance reflect the multifaceted nature of competency. This finding reaffirms that educators who exhibit strong professional skills and attitudes are better equipped to meet their roles' pedagogical and administrative demands. However, the average competency score suggests room for improvement, indicating that current training programs may not be adequately addressing the dynamic demands of vocational education. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce potential biases, necessitating future research employing objective performance assessments to validate these results. While competency was significantly associated with task performance, the strength of this relationship was weaker than anticipated, particularly in the case of professional attitude. This borderline result suggests that while attitudes are important, they may not directly translate into observable performance unless accompanied by institutional incentives or supportive environments. This calls into question the assumption that attitudinal competencies alone can drive effectiveness in the absence of structural support or practical application opportunities.

The partial mediation effect of task performance between competency and professional identity highlights the nuanced interplay among these variables. Educators with high competency not only perform tasks effectively but also internalize their professional roles, resulting in enhanced professional identity (Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2012). This finding corroborates the work of Yang et al. (2015), which identified professional competency as a predictor of professional identity in education. However, contrary to expectations, the mediating effect size was smaller than typically reported in prior studies, suggesting that other unexamined factors—such as organizational climate or leadership support—may also significantly shape professional identity. This highlights the need for more complex models incorporating multiple mediators or moderators. The relatively modest scores for professional identity signal potential challenges in fostering strong self-concepts among educators, possibly due to limited institutional support or inadequate recognition of their efforts. Additionally, differences in institutional policies, workload expectations, and administrative constraints may contribute to variations in professional identity, warranting further investigation into contextual influences.

The strong relationship between task performance and professional identity underscores the importance of task accomplishment in shaping educators' self-perception. This result supports Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social identity theory, which posits that individuals derive self-worth from successfully fulfilling their professional roles. High task performance enhances educators' confidence and self-efficacy, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to their profession (Bandura, 1997). However, it was unexpected that the link between task performance and professional identity was slightly stronger among administrative personnel than among teaching staff. This finding may reflect the clearer evaluation metrics and feedback mechanisms available for administrative roles compared to the more subjective assessments of teaching effectiveness. Future research should explore this discrepancy further, as it may reveal fundamental differences in how different professional subgroups internalize success and recognition.

The observed differences in task performance across demographic variables, such as gender and age, warrant further investigation into systemic factors that may disproportionately affect certain groups. Future studies should explore structural inequalities, institutional biases, and socio-cultural influences that may impact different demographic groups' performance and professional identity development. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance educators' competency and professional identity. Institutions should prioritize competency-based training programs that integrate professional skills and attitudes, ensuring alignment with the evolving demands of vocational education (Kipngetich et al., 2021). Additionally, providing platforms for positive feedback and recognition can amplify task performance and reinforce professional identity (Sachs, 2005). Nonetheless, the implementation of such programs must address the finding that professional attitudes alone may not be sufficient; practical training and structural enablers must be incorporated to ensure attitudes are translated into performance. However, implementing these strategies presents potential

challenges, including resource constraints, resistance to change, and varying institutional readiness. To address these issues, policymakers and administrators should develop phased implementation plans, secure stakeholder buy-in, and ensure continuous evaluation to refine training approaches. Moreover, these strategies should account for demographic disparities to foster equitable opportunities for professional development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, actionable recommendations are proposed in both short-term and long-term dimensions to enhance the alignment between vocational education and societal needs. In the short term, vocational colleges should prioritize competency-based training by integrating practical teaching methodologies, classroom management strategies, and technology-enhanced instruction to improve educators' effectiveness. Workshops and mentorship programs can help foster essential professional attitudes such as responsibility and adaptability. Establishing professional learning communities will further support peer exchange and continuous improvement. Institutions should also implement recognition and feedback systems to strengthen professional identity and motivation. Additionally, tailored training programs that address demographic differences and regional collaboration among vocational colleges can promote inclusivity, resource sharing, and equitable development.

In the long term, continuous professional development must be supported through financial incentives, scholarships, and advanced learning opportunities to ensure educators remain adaptable to evolving educational demands. Policymakers should develop standardized competency frameworks to unify benchmarks for vocational education while increasing government funding to support institutional growth. Strengthening collaboration between education and industry is essential for bridging the gap between academic preparation and labor market needs, including the integration of internships and co-designed programs. Furthermore, vocational institutions should invest in research and innovation to explore the long-term effects of competency development and leverage digital tools to improve both teaching and administrative processes. These long-term strategies aim to build a sustainable, responsive vocational education system aligned with societal and economic progress.

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